

--2. (Amended) The method for welding a Si-based material according to claim 1, wherein a water cooling plate is used as an anode side electrode of said first and second electrodes.--

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--3. (Amended) The method for welding a Si-based material according to claim 1, wherein a tungsten electrode is used as a cathode side electrode of said first and second electrodes.--

--4. (Amended) The method for welding a Si-based material according to claim 1, further comprising:

providing means for improving a directionality of said arc.--

--5. (Amended) The method for welding a Si-based material according to claim 2, further comprising:

providing means for improving a directionality of said arc.--

--6. (Amended) The method for welding a Si-based material according to claim 3, further comprising:

providing means for improving a directionality of said arc.--

--7. (Amended) The method for welding a Si-based material according to claim 4, wherein said arc directionality means includes a raised portion on a central surface portion of one of said first and second electrodes and projecting toward a other of said first and second electrodes.--

--8. (Amended) The method for welding a Si-based material according to claim 1, wherein:

following said generating step, a length of said arc is gradually

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extended prior to bringing said Si-based material proximal said arc column.--

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